

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 17973 01 OF 04 292112Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----019145 292118Z /70

O 292049Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACI IMMEDIATE 2036
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 CAIRO 17973

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

USDEL NO. 23

FOR SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (ATHERTON, ALFRED L., JR.)
SUBJECT: ATHERTON MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER
- KAMEL - JULY 29

1. SUMMARY: EILTS AND I HAD SECOND MEETING THIS AFTER-NOON WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL. CONVERSATION FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON OUR IDEAS FOR BRIDGING DIFFERENCES WHICH I PRESENTED TO KAMEL AS GIVEN IN OUR APPROVED TALKING POINTS. KAMEL'S REACTION WAS QUITE NEGATIVE, BUT I FEEL THIS WAS PARTLY CAUSED BY HIS NOT FULLY UNDERSTANDING FULL IMPORT OF WHAT WE WERE PUTTING FORWARD. HIS MIND SET IS SUCH THAT HE FINDS IT DIFFICULT TO APPROACH SUBJECT WITH ANY DEGREE OF OBJECTIVITY. WE WERE SOMEWHAT HAMPERED IN THIS BY FACT THAT WE WERE NOT IN A POSITION TO PRESENT OUR IDEAS IN MORE DETAILED FORM. WE HAD REPEATEDLY TO EXPLAIN, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THESE IDEAS WERE NOT DESIGNED TO REPLACE, BUT WERE COMPLEMENTARY TO A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. BOTH KAMEL AND OSAMA AL BAZ, WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT, STATED REPEATEDLY THAT THEY

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 17973 01 OF 04 292112Z

THOUGHT WHAT WE WERE PROPOSING REQUIRED ISRAEL TO COMMIT ITSELF ONLY TO NEGOTIATIONS FOR A FINAL PEACE SETTLEMENT BUT NOT TO THE OBLIGATIONS ON WHICH THAT PEACE SETTLEMENT WOULD BE BASED, AND IN PARTICULAR NOT TO WITHDRAW FROM WEST BANK/GAZA. WE URGED THAT THEY SHOULD TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR CONCEPT BECAUSE IT DID IN FACT REQUIRE ISRAEL TO COMMIT ITSELF AT THE OUTSET TO PRINCIPLE OF WITH-

DRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK AND GAZA IN ACCORDANCE WITH RESOLUTION 242. KAMEL SAID HE THOUGHT THAT IN ANY U.S. PROPOSAL THE BASIC EQUATION--PEACE AND SECURITY FOR WITHDRAWAL--SHOULD BE STATED AT THE HEAD OF THE DOCUMENT. THEN IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO TALK ABOUT THE "DETAILS" OF HOW THAT EQUATION COULD BE IMPLEMENTED WHICH COULD INCLUDE THE PROVISIONS FOR A TRANSITIONAL REGIME. KAMEL SPENT SOME TIME READING THROUGH THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL AND CITED IT AS BETTER MODEL FOR WHAT THE U.S. SHOULD PUT FORWARD. HE ALSO STATED THAT THE U.S. SHOULD INCLUDE IN ANY PROPOSAL BASIC U.S. PRINCIPLES ON THE ISSUES AS ENUNCIATED BY PRESIDENT CARTER, SUCH AS WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE TO THE 67 BORDERS WITH MINOR MODIFICATIONS, AND THAT THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES ARE ILLEGAL.

2. TOWARD END OF MEETING I GAVE KAMEL OUR ASSESSMENT OF WHAT WE THOUGHT HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AT LEEDS AND OUTLINED TO HIM WHERE WE THOUGHT COMMON GROUND COULD BE IDENTIFIED. FINAL TOPIC WAS ANOTHER GO-AROUND ON QUESTION OF EGYPTIAN PARTICIPATION IN TALKS. I ASKED MOHAMMED WHETHER HE HAD ANY FURTHER IDEAS AS TO HOW EGYPT MIGHT PROCEED TO NEXT ROUND OF TALKS WE HAD TALKED ABOUT. KAMEL SAID WE SHOULD WAIT TO SEE SADAT (OUR MEETING IS STILL SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY MORNING) AND THEN CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT EGYPT'S WILLINGNESS TO

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 CAIRO 17973 01 OF 04 292112Z

GO TO ANOTHER ROUND OF TALKS DEPENDED VERY MUCH ON THE KIND OF PROPOSAL THE U.S. WAS INTENDING TO PUT FORWARD.
END SUMMARY.

3. WE MET FOR TWO AND ONE-HALF HOURS WITH KAMEL THIS AFTERNOON. AL BAZ AND MAHER WERE PRESENT FOR THE EGYPTIANS; AMBASSADOR EILTS, STERNER AND SHERMAN ACCOMPANIED ME.

4. I OPENED DISCUSSION BY SAYING THAT I WANTED TO GO OVER OUR IDEAS AS TO HOW THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES MIGHT BE BRIDGED. I EMPHASIZED THAT I WOULD NOT BE PRESENTING THEM THAT AFTERNOON IN TEXTUAL FORM, BUT RATHER AS GENERAL IDEAS AND TO SUGGEST THE DIRECTION OF OUR THINKING WHICH IS STILL BEING CONSIDERED AT POLICY LEVEL IN WASHINGTON. OUR IDEAS COULD BE PLACED UNDER TWO HEADINGS. FIRST, HOW TO ADDRESS WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD, AND SECOND, HOW ONE DEALT WITH THE MORE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE OF WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. I SAID TWO THINGS HAD HAPPENED SINCE WE HAD GONE OVER OUR NINE POINTS WITH PRESIDENT SADAT AT HURGHADA IN APRIL. IN

THE FIRST PLACE, WE HAD REFORMULATED SOME OF OUR IDEAS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT SADAT'S COMMENTS AT THAT TIME AND WE ALSO NOW HAD THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT. I THEN READ VERBATIM TO KAMEL OUR APPROVED TALKING POINTS. I DID THIS AT SLOW SPEED SO THAT IT COULD BE TAKEN DOWN ACCURATELY, BUT DID NOT LEAVE ANYTHING WITH THEM ON PAPER. KAMEL INTERRUPTED AT SEVERAL POINTS WITH COMMENTS WHICH I WILL REPORT IN DETAIL SINCE SOME OF THEM MAY BE OF HELP IN FURTHER DEVELOPING OUR OWN IDEAS.

5. ON FIRST POINT DESCRIBING A TRANSITIONAL REGIME,

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 17973 02 OF 04 292120Z
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 04 CAIRO 17973

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KAMEL SAID HE DID NOT LIKE THE WORD "INHABITANTS". WHY WERE WE USING ALL OF THESE EUPHEMISMS FOR "THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE"? WE EXPLAINED THAT THE LATTER PHRASE WAS SUBJECT TO THE INTERPRETATION THAT IT COULD INCLUDE ALL OF THE REFUGEES AS WELL AS THE PEOPLE RESIDING IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

6. AS I READ THE SECOND POINT, KAMEL ASKED WHO THE PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT WOULD BE? I EXPLAINED THEY WOULD BE ISRAEL AS THE OCCUPYING POWER AND JORDAN AND EGYPT BECAUSE OF THEIR FORMER ROLES AS CUSTODIANS OVER THE WEST BANK AND GAZA RESPECTIVELY. I POINTED OUT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR CONCEPT, WHEREBY AUTHORITY SHOULD DERIVE FROM THE AGREEMENT AMONG THE PARTIES, WITH THE ISRAELI PROPOSAL BY WHICH ISRAEL COULD UNILATERALLY DEVOLVE AUTHORITY TO THE LOCAL INHABITANTS. THE THIRD POINT, SPECIFYING THAT ISRAELI TROOPS COULD BE WITHDRAWN TO DESIGNATED AREAS IN DESIGNATED NUMBERS ELICITED NO COMMENT. ON THE FOURTH, ABOUT THE FREELY-ELECTED GOVERNING COUNCIL, KAMEL AGAIN

ASKED WHO IN PRACTICE WOULD ADMINISTER THE TERRITORIES?
I REPLIED "THE INHABITANTS OF THE TERRITORIES". KAMEL
ASKED WHAT ABOUT THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES? I SAID THE
QUESTION OF THE RETURN OF THE REFUGEES WOULD HAVE TO
BE ONE OF THE ISSUES RESOLVED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.
KAMEL ALSO ASKED ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE ISRAELI SETTLE-
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 17973 02 OF 04 292120Z

MENTS. I SAID OUR IDEAS AS I WAS PRESCRIBING THEM THAT
AFTERNOON DID NOT DEAL WITH THIS QUESTION. THIS, TOO,
WOULD BE A SUBJECT FOR NEGOTIATIONS.

7. WITH RESPECT TO THE PARAGRAPH ON PUBLIC ORDER AND
SECURITY, KAMEL ASKED HOW WE PROPOSED TO DEFINE ISRAELI
SECURITY. I SAID THAT WE HAD NOT CARRIED IT BEYOND
THESE GENERAL TERMS. BUT DEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE RESIDUAL ISRAELI PRESENCE DURING A TRANSI-
TIONAL PERIOD AND THE NEWLY-FORMED LOCAL AUTHORITIES
WAS AN IMPORTANT QUESTION THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED
OUT. THERE WERE TWO ASPECTS OF SECURITY THAT WOULD
HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH. ONE WAS THE THREAT PRESENTED
BY CONVENTIONAL WARFARE AND THE OTHER THE THREAT PRE-
SENTED BY TERRORISM.

8. ON OUR POINT ABOUT A SPECIAL ADVISORY ROLE FOR
JORDAN AND EGYPT, KAMEL ASKED WHETHER WE HAD ANYTHING
IN OUR IDEAS ABOUT A UN PRESENCE. I SAID NONE IN TERMS
OF THE VERY GENERAL IDEAS THAT WE PRESENTED THIS EVENING,
BUT I ALSO MADE THE POINT THAT WHAT WE WERE CONVEYING
WERE NOT MEANT TO BE ALL-INCLUSIVE IN THE SENSE OF THE
DETAILED IDEAS THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT IN THE
PROCESS OF REACHING AGREEMENT.

9. I PREFACED MY READING OF THE KEY PARAGRAPH ON NEGO-
TIATIONS FOR A FINAL PEACE SETTLEMENT BY CALLING
KAMEL'S ATTENTION TO ITS IMPORTANCE. IT DEALT WITH
HOW THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD WOULD BE USED TO NEGOTIATE
THE FINAL TERMS OF A PEACE SETTLEMENT. I EMPHASIZED
AFTER READING OUR LANGUAGE THAT THIS IN FACT REQUIRED
ISRAELI COMMITMENT AS PART OF THE FIRST STAGE OF AGREE-
MENT TO THE NEGOTIATION OF A FINAL SETTLEMENT IN AC-
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SECRET

PAGE 03 CAIRO 17973 02 OF 04 292120Z

CORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF RESOLUTION 242, IN-
CLUDING WITHDRAWAL.

10. ON THE FINAL POINT CONCERNING AN EXPRESSION OF CONSENT TO THE TERMS OF A PEACE SETTLEMENT, KAMEL ASKED ABOUT THE TERM "POPULACE". "WHY NOT SAY THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE"? I EXPLAINED HERE FOR THE FIRST OF MANY TIMES THAT THE IDEAS WE WERE PRESENTING THIS AFTERNOON WERE NOT INTENDED TO SUPPLANT A DECLARATION OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES WHICH WAS STILL ON THE TABLE AND WHICH WOULD BE A COMPANION PIECE TO THESE MORE SPECIFIC IDEAS ABOUT THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

11. KAMEL ASKED WHETHER WE PROPOSED TO DEAL WITH THE ISSUE OF SOVEREIGNTY IN OUR IDEAS. I EXPLAINED THAT THE LANGUAGE WE HAD GONE OVER WITH HIM DID SO IMPLICITLY, AND I REMINDED HIM THAT IN OUR CONVERSATION WITH SADAT IN APRIL, SADAT HAD EXPRESSED THE PREFERENCE THAT THE ISSUE OF SOVEREIGNTY NOT BE MENTIONED EXPLICITLY. AL BAZ SAID THAT IF IT WAS OUR POSITION THAT OUR LANGUAGE ON NEGOTIATING THE TERMS OF A FINAL PEACE SETTLEMENT IN EFFECT WAS SAYING THAT THE ISSUE OF SOVEREIGNTY WOULD BE RESOLVED AT THE END OF THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD, THERE WAS NO REASON NOT TO SAY SO EXPLICITLY. THIS POINT SHOULD NOT BE LEFT VAGUE, SAID AL BAZ.

12. AL BAZ OBSERVED THAT THERE WAS NOTHING IN OUR IDEAS THAT ASSERTED THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS. HE SAID THIS WAS VERY IMPORTANT TO EGYPT. I SAID I WOULD MAKE THREE POINTS IN ANSWER TO THIS. FIRST THE PARTIES TO THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE FINAL TERMS OF A PEACE SETTLEMENT WOULD INCLUDE RE-

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 17973 03 OF 04 292129Z
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S E C R E T SECTION 03 OF 04 CAIRO 17973
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PRESENTATIVES OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. THE SECOND
WAS THAT AT THE END OF PROCESS WE ENVISAGED A PROCESS

BY WHICH THE INHABITANTS OF THE AREA COULD EXPRESS THEIR CONSENT TO THE TERMS OF THE PEACE TREATY. FINALLY, I POINTED OUT THAT THERE WOULD PRESUMABLY BE, IN ADDITION TO THESE IDEAS ABOUT A WEST BANK/GAZA SETTLEMENT, A DECLARATION OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES WHICH WE HAD PROPOSED SHOULD INCLUDE OUR ASWAN LANGUAGE IN ADDITION TO A REITERATION OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF 242.

13. KAMEL ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS ANYTHING MORE THAT I INTENDED TO CONVEY, AND WHEN I SAID THAT WAS THE ESSENCE OF OUR IDEAS (AGAIN EMPHASIZING THAT WE WERE NOT PROPOSING TO PUT THEM FORWARD ON THIS OCCASION IN WRITTEN OR DETAILED FORM) HE ASKED "DO YOU REALLY MEAN TO PROCEED ON THIS BASIS"? HE SAID EGYPT COULD NOT AGREE TO A PROPOSAL WHICH MAKES WITHDRAWAL ONE OF THE ISSUES FOR NEGOTIATIONS. ISRAEL SHOULD COMMIT ITSELF TO WITHDRAW JUST AS EGYPT WAS WILLING TO COMMIT ITSELF TO PEACE, SECURITY AND GOOD NEIGHBORLY RELATIONS, AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DOCUMENT. THEN ONE COULD DISCUSS HOW THOSE "MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS" SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED. ISRAEL'S SECURITY CONCERNS COULD BE DEALT WITH AND THE DETAILS OF A TRANSITIONAL REGIME SPELLED OUT.

14. KAMEL SAID HE THOUGHT THAT OUR ASWAN PHRASEOLOGY
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SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 17973 03 OF 04 292129Z

SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN THIS DOCUMENT THROUGHOUT EVEN IF THERE WERE TO BE AN ACCOMPANYING DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. HE SAID HE ALSO HAD A STRONG OBJECTION TO THE SUBSTITUTIONS WE HAD USED FOR "PALESTINIAN PEOPLE" THROUGHOUT THE DOCUMENT. HE DID NOT LIKE THE TERMS "INHABITANTS" OR "POPULACE". WE HAD REFERRED IN OUR ASWAN FORMULA TO "THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE" AND HE SAW NO REASON WHY THAT PHRASEOLOGY SHOULD NOT APPEAR IN THESE IDEAS.

15. KAMEL SAID HE FOUND IT UNFORTUNATE THAT OUR APPROACH WAS APPARENTLY BASED ON A COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE EGYPTIAN AND THE ISRAELI PROPOSALS. WHAT EGYPT WANTS IS A CLEAR STATEMENT OF POSITION FROM THE UNITED STATES. WHY WAS THERE NOTHING IN THE LANGUAGE WE HAD GIVEN HIM THIS AFTERNOON ABOUT THE ILLEGALITY OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORY, A POSITION WE HAD TAKEN SO OFTEN IN THE PAST? WHAT ABOUT A REFERENCE TO "MINOR RECTIFICATIONS" IN CONNECTION WITH THE REFERENCE TO WITHDRAWAL AND BORDERS ON THE WEST BANK? THAT PHRASE TOO WAS ABSENT FROM OUR CURRENT IDEAS. PRESIDENT CARTER HAD PUBLICLY STATED THIS; WE SHOULD STICK TO THE POSITIONS WHICH WE HAVE PUBLICLY ENUNCIATED. KAMEL SAID THE ARABS WERE INTERESTED TO KNOW WHERE THE

UNITED STATES STOOD. THE UNITED STATES WAS GOING TO CLASH WITH ISRAEL ANYWAY. "WHY NOT DO IT ON A FORTH-RIGHT BASIS THAT SETS OUT ALL OF YOUR PRINCIPLES?"

16. KAMEL THEN WENT THROUGH THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL PARAGRAPH BY PARAGRAPH, WHICH HE CONTENDED SHOULD BE THE BASIS FOR ANY U.S. PROPOSALS. WE AGREED THAT WITH MINOR EXCEPTIONS THE BASIC PRINCIPLES IN THE FIRST THREE PARAGRAPHS OF THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL WERE NOT FAR

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 CAIRO 17973 03 OF 04 292129Z

FROM THE CONCEPTS EMBODIED IN OUR IDEAS. KAMEL THEN CAME TO THE EGYPTIAN PARAGRAPH 4. KAMEL SAID THIS WAS WHERE WE COME TO THE CRUX OF THE MATTER. I AGREED AND SAID IT WAS ALSO WHERE WE CAME TO TROUBLE. I SAID EGYPT COULD NOT EXPECT US TO PUT FORWARD A COMPLETE BLUEPRINT FOR A FINAL PEACE SETTLEMENT IN THIS MANNER. WE HAD NEVER BEEN WILLING TO DO THIS. EVER SINCE THE NEGOTIATION OF RESOLUTION 242, WE HAVE MAINTAINED THE POSITION THAT THE NEGOTIATION OF SPECIFIC ISSUES SUCH AS THE PRECISE LOCATION OF BORDERS, SOLUTION TO THE JERUSALEM PROBLEM, ETC. HAD TO COME THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

17. KAMEL AND AL BAZ TOOK UP THE POINT ABOUT JERUSALEM. THEY PROPOSED TO ADD LANGUAGE IN THEIR PLAN TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT JERUSALEM WOULD NOT BE REDIVIDED, THAT THERE WOULD BE ACCESS FOR THE ADHERENTS OF ALL FAITHS, ETC. AMBASSADOR EILTS POINTED OUT THAT WHAT WAS IN THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL HAD REALLY BEEN SUPERCEDED IN ANY CASE BY WHAT SADAT HAD TOLD WEIZMAN MIGHT BE A SOLUTION FOR JERUSALM. THIS LED TO A LENGTHY AND EMOTIONAL MONOLOGUE FROM KAMEL. HE MAINTAINED SADAT HAD BEEN SPEAKING ONLY "IN GENERAL TERMS" TO WEIZMAN ABOUT THIS SUBJECT. THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION, HE ASSERTED REPEATEDLY, WAS AS STATED IN THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL. EILTS PERSISTED THAT IN HIS OWN CONVERSATION WITH SADAT HE HAD RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION THAT WHILE SADAT'S COMMENTS TO WEIZMAN ON AL-ARISH COULD HAVE BEEN TAKEN AS A BROAD GESTURE, HIS REMARKS ON JERUSALEM WERE MORE CAREFULLY FORMULATED. AL BAZ SAID THAT WHAT SADAT WAS REALLY SAYING WAS THAT ISRAEL HAD THE BASIC OB-

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 17973 04 OF 04 292137Z
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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACI IMMEDIATE 2039
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 04 OF 04 CAIRO 17973

NODIS

LIGATION TO WITHDRAW FROM JERUSALEM AS FROM THE REST
OF THE WEST BANK, BUT THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT THE CITY
HAD TO BE REDIVIDED IN TERMS OF SERVICES, OF ACCESS TO
RELIGIOUS SITES, OR FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE.

18. AL BAZ SAID EGYPT DID NOT WANT A PROPOSAL FROM THE
UNTIED STATES THAT EVADED THE BASIC ISSUES AND INSTEAD
CONCENTRATED "ON PROCEDURES". KAMEL SAID THAT THE
ENTIRE ARAB WORLD WAS EXPECTING THE UNITED STATES TO
ACT COURAGEOUSLY. HE RECOMMENDED STRONGLY THAT WE TAKE
THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL AS THE MODEL FOR OUR APPROACH.
"ON THE BASIS OF YOUR LANGUAGE, YOU WILL NEVER GET THE
JORDANIANS OR THE PALESTINIANS TO COME INTO THE NEGO-
TIATIONS". FINALLY, KAMEL SAID HOW OUR "PROPOSAL"
TURNED OUT WAS CONNECTED VERY MUCH TO EGYPT'S WILLING-
NESS TO PARTICIPATE IN ANOTHER ROUND OF TALKS. HE SAID
THIS WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT ON THE BASIS OF
WHAT HAD BEEN PUT FORWARD THIS AFTERNOON.

19. KAMEL COMPLAINED THAT THE GOE HAD "AGAIN BEEN
EMBARRASSED" BY WHAT SPOKESMAN RESTON HAD SAID YESTER-
DAY TO THE EFFECT THAT THE UNITED STATES EXPECTED A
TRIPARTITE MEETING TO BE HELD IN THE BEGINNING OF
AUGUST. THIS LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT EGYPT HAD AGREED
TO GO INTO NEW TALKS WHEN IN FACT IT HAD NOT, AND THIS
WAS PARTICULARLY EMBARRASSING FOR EGYPT IN ITS RELATIONS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 17973 04 OF 04 292137Z

WITH OTHER ARABS. I SAID IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THE
SPOKESMAN HAD DONE NOTHING MORE THAN REPEAT WHAT THE
SECRETARY HAD SAID AT LEEDS, WHICH WAS THAT WE ANTI-
CIPATED AND EXPECTED THAT ANOTHER ROUND OF TALKS WOULD
BE ARRANGED. EILTS MADE THE POINT THAT REALISTICALLY
PREPARATIONS FOR SUCH A MEETING HAD TO BE MADE IN AD-
VANCE. THERE WERE ALL KINDS OF ARRANGEMENTS THAT HAD
TO BE MADE. KAMEL SAID THE QUESTION OF VENUE WOULD

BE NO PROBLEM, BUT IT HAD TO BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THAT SADAT HAD NOT YET AGREED TO THE TALKS.

20. IN THE FINAL PORTION OF OUR MEETING, I BRIEFED KAMEL IN GENERAL TERMS ON OUR IMPRESSION OF WHAT HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AT THE LEEDS TALKS. I FIRST PRAISED THE CAREFUL PREPARATION OF THE EGYPTIAN DELEGATION FOR THE TALKS, SAYING THAT THE SPECIFICITY WITH WHICH THEY TALKED ABOUT SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AND THE SEQUENCE OF STEPS BY WHICH AGREEMENTS MIGHT BE REACHED HAD BEEN A DEFINITE CONTRIBUTION TO THE TALKS. I SAID I ALSO BELIEVED THAT IT HAD HAD AN IMPACT ON THE ISRAELIS. I DOUBTED, FOR EXAMPLE, WHETHER DAYAN WOULD HAVE COME UP WITH HIS NEW FORMULATION ON THE QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE LEEDS TALKS.

21. I ALSO SAID THAT I THOUGHT THERE HAD BEEN SOME ADVANTAGE IN ATTEMPTING TO IDENTIFY COMMON GROUND BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES IN THE LIGHT OF THE LEEDS TALKS. WHEN WE DID THIS, WE WANTED TO EMPHASIZE WE WERE NOT ATTEMPTING TO SUBSTITUTE THIS FOR THE BASIC ISSUES WHICH WE RECOGNIZE REMAIN UNRESOLVED. I THEN OUTLINED WHERE WE IDENTIFIED COMMON GROUND AS GIVEN IN OUR TALKING POINTS. NEITHER KAMEL NOR AL BAZ QUARRELED WITH OUR DEFINITION OF WHERE WE FOUND COMMONALITY.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 CAIRO 17973 04 OF 04 292137Z

BOTH, HOWEVER, COMPLAINED MILDLY THAT THIS CARRIED WITH IT THE DANGER OF DELUDING PEOPLE AS TO THE TRUE STATE OF AFFAIRS. IT HAD TO BE CLEAR THAT THESE AREAS OF COMMON GROUND WERE LIMITED TO THE TANGENTIAL ASPECTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. I COMMENTED THAT WHENEVER WE SPOKE OF COMMON GROUND, WE ALWAYS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THIS WAS OUR OWN ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION; WE WERE NOT REPORTING THAT THE PARTIES HAD REACHED ANY FORMAL AGREEMENTS ON THESE POINTS.

22. I ASKED KAMEL WHETHER HE HAD HAD ANY FURTHER THOUGHT ON HOW EGYPT MIGHT SEE ITS WAY TO PARTICIPATING IN THE NEXT ROUND OF TALKS. KAMEL SAID THAT WE SHOULD WAIT TO SEE THE PRESIDENT TOMORROW BEFORE DISCUSSING THIS FURTHER. THE MEETING ENDED WITH A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF HOW TO HANDLE THIS PART OF OUR CONVERSATION WITH THE PRESS. EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS, PLANNING MEETINGS, PEACE TALKS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CAIRO17973
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P850067-1964
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978076/aaaaaeoz.tel
Line Count: 488
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cf039e73-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Page Count: 9
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS, EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2006160
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ATHERTON MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL - JUL 29
TAGS: OVIP, PDIP, MPOL, PBOR, US, EG, IS, (KAMEL, MOHAMMED IBRAHIM), (ATHERTON, ALFRED L JR)
To: STATE SS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cf039e73-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014